

## **LOW INCOME HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (LIHEAP)**

### **PROGRAM PURPOSE**

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) Block Grant is funded through the Federal Department of Health and Human Services. The purpose of the LIHEAP program is to assist Rhode Island's low-income households meet the increasing cost of home energy and reduce the severity of an energy related crisis. Rhode Island's LIHEAP is administered by the Office of Energy Resources. LIHEAP intake and outreach is provided by local Community Action Agencies (CAP Agencies).

Last winter, the LIHEAP program provided Primary heating grants to approximately 34,000 low-income Rhode Island families. The LIHEAP program also assisted 5,700 families with Crisis Assistance.

### **PROGRAM DATES**

Applications are mailed to previous year LIHEAP recipients in September. Starting in October, households applying for the first time should contact their local LIHEAP agency to set up an appointment. The LIHEAP agency will let you know if you are eligible and what documentation and information you need to provide in order to complete a LIHEAP application. The LIHEAP "Primary Grant" is open from October through March depending on the availability of the Federal funds. LIHEAP offers a year round "Crisis Program" which is also dependent on the availability of Federal Funds.

### **PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY**

Households shall be determined eligible for assistance according to the income guidelines established by OER, and the household is vulnerable to increases in home energy costs. The FY'2010 LIHEAP guidelines are set at 60% of the Rhode Island median income. See the website <http://energy.ri.gov> to see the 2009-2010 income guidelines.

### **INTAKE AGENCIES**

There are seven (7) CAP Agencies located throughout RI where families can apply for LIHEAP assistance. The seven CAP Agencies are responsible for intake screening of clients, authorizing and disbursing payments, and maintaining audible records of expenditures. An applicant's residence determines which intake site a household must apply. See the website <http://energy.ri.gov> to get a list of CAP Agencies.

### **2010 PROGRAM FUNDING**

In FY 2010, LIHEAP received approximately \$29.6 million in appropriations and \$4 million in contingency funds for a total LIHEAP funding of \$33.6 million.

### **PRIMARY GRANT ASSISTANCE**

The LIHEAP Primary Grant is the one time initial benefit awarded on behalf of the applicant. The Primary Grants range from \$200-\$900, depending on poverty level based on family size and household income. To ensure effectiveness of the fuel assistance funding, LIHEAP funds are paid directly to the Energy vendor on behalf of the LIHEAP client. The average primary grant paid this winter was \$675 per household.

A written “Confirmation Letter” will be generated when an application is processed and approved. A confirmation letter will be mailed to the client, with a copy also sent to the client's fuel vendor. Primary Grant confirmations are distributed by the intake agency that is responsible for authorizations/payments. Vendors are required to start delivering fuel upon receipt of the Confirmation Letter.

### **CRISIS ASSISTANCE**

Crisis assistance is provided to eligible households that experience an energy crisis related to maintaining heat in the home. The number of crisis grants available to any single household shall be determined by the funds available to the State. In addition, OER's Heating System Replacement Program is funded through the LIHEAP Crisis Program.

### **Related Links**

[www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/liheap](http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/liheap)



